1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
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CHAPTER IX
MAGIC AND MEDICINE

121 755 It is not merely convenient to discuss magic and medicine together; it is almost inevitable. In Tepoztlán, as among other simple peoples, the two fields very largely overlap. Medicine is to a great degree magical, and most current magical practices are also medical. Partly because the rational cure of disease depends on a great body of accumulated knowledge and experimentation, and perhaps partly because the mere expression of a wish to be cured is sometimes effective, magical behavior persists longer in the field of medicine than in almost any other field of human concern. The separation of magic and medicine is, in a sense, a unique event; and even in modern Western society the separation is yet incomplete.

755 In Tepoztlán the only generally recognized and practiced body of magic has to do with medical cures. [754] Black magic exists in the form of witchcraft; in the present study materials are largely lacking, but it is probably not uncommon. It is, however, surreptitious, and is entering, to the people themselves, into the limbo of superstition. White magic takes in general [751] the form of amulets and talismans,[1] conveying to the wearer the protective power of priest or *santo*. But in the case of the treatment of disease, there is a large

[1] See Gamio, *La población del valle de Teotihuacan*, II, 220. Perhaps older folk amulets, not involving Catholic symbols, are also used in Tepoztlán.

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spirits of the air. They are found wherever there is water—at water tanks, in ravines, at public washing-places, in the rain. They are thought of as very little people. The sure diagnostic feature is their appearance in dreams to the person afflicted; he sees them scolding him and striking at him. Then he knows that he has offended them.

Los aires[1] may cause all sorts of mischief. Mere stumbling may be attributed to them. There are certain very characteristic symptoms, however. They disfigure the mouth (*tecamacolohua*); they bring spots (*texiomaca*); they bring pimples or sores (*tezahuama*); they cause palsy (*tecohcototzohua*). Paralysis and scab-like sores are especially attributed to them.

An important part of the treatment for this disease is washing with certain herbs.[2] There are also several internal remedies. Powdered woodpecker's head is one of these. Amulets[3] are worn to keep away the disease. People are careful to keep away from places where water collects. It is dangerous to bathe in the open for this reason.

The washing with herbs should be done at the intersection of two streets. When it is completed, the bundle of herbs is flung away and everyone rushes into the house without looking back. Often the washing with herbs includes fumigation with the smoke of a cigarette.

[1] The name is applied to the beings as well as to the disease.

[2] Esp. *Piqueria trinervia* Cav. and *Salvia microphylla* H.B.K.

[3] Commonly the seeds of *Mucuna*, perforated and equipped with bits of colored yarn.

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men carry their breakfast with them, to be warmed and eaten later. (See Fig. 40.) They may eat once again at noon and have their dinner when they arrive home, at any time from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M.

When they eat at home they are usually served first and receive preferential treatment. The women and children who remain at home eat breakfast at 7:00 or 8:00 A.M., dinner at about 1:00 P.M., and supper at dusk. Younger children are generally fed before the mother and the older daughter sit down to eat. In most homes the

Fig. 40. Men eating in the fields.

members of the family sit on low chairs or stools, or the women and children sit on the floor. Very few families use a table except during a fiesta meal, and then it is only for the men and guests. Likewise, knives and forks are generally reserved for fiesta times only. The mother serves, handing each person his food in a bowl or wrapped in a tortilla. Spoons may be used, but food is usually eaten with the tortilla as a spoon.

For most people, breakfast consists of black coffee and tortilla. Some take milk in their coffee and eat bread instead of tortilla; some eat toasted meat or warmed-over beans. During hard times, poorer families drink tea made from cinnamon or local herbs instead of coffee. It should be remembered that coffee drinking is a relatively new phenomenon among the poor; in the late nineteenth century only the *caciques* could afford it. Today, tea drinking is associated with poverty or illness, for many of the teas are used to cure stomach-ache, colds, sore throats, etc.[9]

[9] In many families it is customary for the father to begin the day with a drink of alcohol. Similarly, when the peasants return from the fields at night, they generally take a drink of alcohol to counteract *los aires* and to avoid taking cold.

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him revert to human form. *Naguales* have the power to enter houses, even when doors are closed, can steal anything, and can quietly carry off girls by putting them into a deep sleep. To prevent thefts by *Naguales* a cross is marked on the bottom of *metates* which then become too heavy for the *Nagual* to lift. Some *Naguales* will steal girls for a sum of money. *Naguales* cannot be wounded by a knife or a gun, and it is impossible to hit them or throw stones at them because of a secret power which defends them. Some people believe that El Tepozteco can turn himself into a *Nagual* and that he is their chief.

Los aires are mysterious forces, variously thought of as winds, spirits, or little people who may cause sores, pimples, paralysis, and other illnesses. They are found in stream beds, ravines, in stagnant pools, and atop the highest hills. Tepoztecans are careful to avoid *los aires* and not to offend them. Some old women still say certain Náhuatl phrases asking permission of *los aires* to take water from the stream. Those who must pass by stagnant water after bathing in a *temascal* must drop some of the leaves, with which they dried themselves, into the pool in order to avoid headaches, earaches, or watering of the eyes. To get rid of these afflictions one must be cleansed with salt and yarrow leaves which are afterward thrown into the middle of the street. Sometimes when a person eats beside a stream or near a ravine, he will be attacked by *los aires* and will have a headache and fever. The illness is treated by cleansing the person with herbs, which are then thrown into the stream or ravine. If the sick person continues to have fever and dreams of canes, water, or food, it means that *los aires* struck him very hard and must be fed. *Mole*, tamales, and fruit are prepared, and a special loaf of bread in the shape of a doll is ordered from the baker. The doll is decorated in red, and the meal, adorned with red crepe paper, is carried to the suspected stream and left there.[10]

Los aires are also believed to take refuge in anthills, and one who disturbs an anthill may suffer grave injury. For this reason no Tepoztecan dares open an anthill to remove the queen ant, despite the fact that the local variety of ants is very voracious and can destroy an entire cornfield. When a farmer discovers an anthill in his field he will place food, such as mango leaves, around the hole, so that the ants will not eat the corn. The farmers sometimes place poisonous leaves at an anthill, but the ants soon learn not to eat them. Some of the more advanced farmers use chemical products including D.D.T. to kill the ants but even the most educated will not open an anthill.

Informants relate that not long ago a man, not of Tepoztlán, used to sell ant dung as fertilizer. He collected the material from anthills, but after six months of this work he fell ill, became badly crippled, and died. The same thing happened to the uncle of one of our informants; after opening an anthill he spent eight years in bed, crippled and inflamed from the effects of *los aires*.

Belief in good and bad omens continues in Tepoztlán. These beliefs are innu-

[10] In Redfield's account a real doll, with red cheeks and decorated with colored yarn, is used. The bread doll is more closely reminiscent of the dough images offered in propitiation in pre-Hispanic times.

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ing more from her, they show hostility when she fails them; receiving more from her, they feel dependent upon her. In general, the children are more emotionally involved with the mother than with the father. The word "mother" flung in anger during a quarrel is a strong insult and usually results in fighting and violence. 593

The father maintains his position of respect by being withdrawn from the children. Traditionally the Tepoztecan father does not carry infants except in emergencies, nor does he play with them. Children are sharply reprimanded for climbing on their father's lap or for grabbing his leg. Infants soon learn not to reach out to their fathers or expect much attention from them. 854

When four- or five-year-olds run to meet their father on his return from the fields, they are not permitted to jump on him but are taught to walk demurely at his side. As the child, particularly the son, gets older, the father becomes more receptive, but he does not permit physical contact, nor does he spend more time at home with the boy. The traditional way for a father to express his affection is to buy the child little gifts, give him pennies, or take him to the fields or to a fiesta. If the father is very pleased at the birth of a child, he will generally express his pleasure by purchasing as many protective amulets as he can afford. 751

The mother has more ways of demonstrating her affection for a child than has the father. She may kiss, fondle, or carry a nursing child as much as she wishes and may continue to do so until he is five. Generally, the mother avoids demonstrative affection for children after weaning. Because of the mother's position as server, dispenser of food, nurse, etc., she can express her affection by means of all of these. Giving more attention and pennies for sweets, serving larger portions of food, sewing more clothing, worrying over illness or accident, devoting more time to curing, and buying needed school supplies are all common means by which mothers express their affection for a child. Mothers also show their affection by not informing the father of the child's misdeeds or by intervening when the father is punishing the child. Such intervention and deception, although infuriating to the father, viewed as "natural" in a mother. 152 854 855

A child is always punished for flouting the authority of his parents and for unwillingness to work. Behavior which does not involve these has a good chance of being indulged, particularly if backed up by a show of temper, tears, whining, begging, or demanding. If a child wants something badly enough he generally gets it. Even in families in which children are beaten with severity and worked hard, they may get whatever it is they want merely because they "want it." 593 861 865 855

Parents, despite their authoritativeness, can be intimidated by a strong-willed child. Although children in Tepoztlán show obedience early, they are not completely submissive. The ways in which they can express their own tastes and desires with impunity or reward has made for a certain development of the ego. Children sometimes display a self-centered, demanding attitude in connection with food, clothing, money to spend, going to school or fiestas, and, more recently, time for play. The variety we find in both punishment and indulgence stems from differences in interpretation as to when parental authority is or is not involved. For some,

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As the couple grow older, the husband may make the selection, and often friendship, rather than higher economic status, dictates the choice.

Godparents address their godchildren in the familiar *tú* and are addressed in turn by the respectful *Vd.* Traditionally, the godchild had to kiss the godparent's hand at each meeting, but this is no longer common. It is customary for the godparent to offer the child a few centavos upon meeting. But the obligations of the godparent are many. They must assist at the baptism, purchase the child's clothing for the occasion, and pay the fee to the priest. They also accompany the mother and child to the *sacamisa*, or first Mass, which should take place forty days after the birth of the child. If the infant dies they arrange for the wake, dress the child appropriately for burial, and contribute to the expenses of the musicians at the funeral. One of the obligations of the godparent is to urge their *compadres* to send the child to school. If the child learns bad habits or otherwise needs correction, the parents may call upon the godparents to scold the child.

The godparents of confirmation are generally selected by the godparents of baptism, and occasionally the latter may accept both roles. The godparents of marriage are also important figures. One of their functions is to act as mediators between the couple, in case of quarrels or separations.

One of the distinctive aspects of the *compadre* system in Tepoztlán, and in Mexico as a whole, is the way in which the godparent relationship has been extended far beyond the original Catholic forms. In most of Spain there are only two or three types of godparents, popularly those of baptism, communion, and confirmation. Not so in Tepoztlán. In addition to the types mentioned above, Tepoztecans also have the following: *padrino de miscoton*,[6] *padrino de medida o listón*,[7] *padrino de evangelio*,[8] *padrino de escapulario, padrino del niño Jesús*, and others. It would seem that Tepoztecans have utilized every possibility for extending the godparent relationship. This may be a reflection of their seeking security through the extension of ceremonial kinship, for in most of the above cases a *compadre* relationship is formed.

The godparent system has also been extended to secular activities. At soccer and basketball games in the village, each team has its godmother who dresses in white, carries flowers, and acts as the sponsor of the team, handing out the prizes to the winners. At social dances there are also godmothers who act as chaperones for the young people.

Compadres address each other with the respectful *Vd.* and avoid intimacies. They may not drink together, discuss sexual matters, or tell dirty jokes. It is a respect relationship and in this lies its strength. *Compadres* will often exchange favors, and

[6] The term *miscoton* is Nāhuatl and refers to a small sweater which the godparent places on the godchild as a protection against illness.

[7] The *medida o listón* refers to a small piece of ribbon which has been blessed by the priest and is placed on a sick child as a charm against evil.

[8] This godparent is also chosen for a child who is ill. A woman of the world is preferred as a woman with a "hard heart." By going to church and saying a prayer, she becomes the child's godmother.

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16 *infancy and early childhood:*

THERE IS MUCH variety in the treatment and care of infants and children in Tepoztlán because of individual differences and because of the presence of groups representing different cultural and economic levels. The most obvious contrasting practices in child care are those of the more acculturated families and those with only minimal contacts with the outside. The distinction between these two groups is not always clear-cut. Sometimes the mother represents one group and the father the other, reflecting the state of transition which pervades the village and complicates the discussion of customs in no small measure. Frequently there is no difference in customs as such, but rather in the practice of them.

INFANCY

At the birth of a child there is no celebration, and generally little fuss is made. When the first-born is a son, there are usually expressions of pleasure on the part of the father and relatives. But many mothers describe the arrival of their children as causing "neither joy nor argument," and frequently complain of their husband's indifference at the birth of a child. Men do, in fact, maintain an attitude of reserve but often respond to a new arrival by working harder. More modern men do not conceal pleasure at the birth of a child, and behave much the way new fathers do in our society. Gifts are not traditionally given to the child, although some of the more acculturated do this and invite friends in to drink and to eat *mole*.

It is believed that the first weeks of life are dangerous, for the infant is particularly susceptible to the "evil eye," "bad humors," and *los aires*. Non-relatives are not encouraged to see a newborn child, though the more modern families permit it after a few days. Babies sleep behind a curtain and are protected from "bad humors" with *ruda* and chile which are placed in the form of a cross beneath the pillow or mattress of the cradle, and by a few drops of iodine on their clothing. Some families hang a gallstone, taken from the gall bladder of a bull, around the child's wrist to protect him from the "evil eye." This is no longer done in some of the better educated families. After one month, a centavo may be hung on a string around the child's neck to protect him from whooping cough. Some tie on a little

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751 854 bag of chile seed as protection from other diseases. Babies in all families wear little caps for seven months to protect them from *los aires* or, as the more modern mothers say, from cold drafts.

753 854 Anyone coming in from the street must "cool" for awhile before going to see the baby because they may be "hot" and make the child ill. If the father of the child has committed adultery and then comes home "hot," he must be particularly careful to "cool," lest he give the child an eye inflammation. Sometimes jealous wives will accuse adulterous husbands of selfishness on the ground that they are endangering the infant's health. Children are rarely taken into the street during the first four months, or until their caps are removed, for fear of *los aires*. More modern families take their children out earlier.

[774] Every child is believed to have a *tonal* or *sombra*, something akin to a guardian spirit which protects him from illness. A weak child has a weak *tonal;* a robust child has a powerful *tonal*. A child's illness is sometimes attributed to the fact that [755] his *tonal* has left his body and must be called back if he is to be cured. In such cases of spirit-loss, a special *curandero* is called in to "lay the shadow." Incense is burned while the *curandero* cures the child.

851 608 [848] Babies are usually baptized within the first week after birth. An infant who is expected to die is baptized on the same day, otherwise most parents prefer the third day. Children born out of wedlock or under abnormal circumstances may not be baptized until many months or even one or two years later. Godparents of baptism are selected before the birth of the child. While the couple is young, their parents, generally the husband's parents, select the godparents, who are usually though not necessarily a married couple. Later, the husband alone makes the selection. The husband's mother or some older woman in the family goes to the house of the prospective godfather and makes the formal request, "Would you be so kind as to take a child to be baptized?" If the answer is in the affirmative she thanks them and says that she will return to let them know when the baptism will be. Sometimes the person refuses the request, pleading that he is too old or ill or cannot undertake new obligations, in which case he may suggest the name of a relative.[1] When the grandmother making the request returns, she carries two branches of white flowers and two four-ounce candles. On the day of the baptism, the child, his father, and grandmother meet the godparents inside the church. The godmother holds the child during the baptism and pays the priest's fee, which is from five to ten pesos. At the door of the church the godparents distribute small coins to all the children who happen to be gathered there, and every one returns to his respective home. On the following day the child's family brings a gift usually consisting of bread, sugar, chocolate, and milk to the godparents.

[1] Theoretically, an invitation to become godparent is a high token of esteem and respect, and the acceptance of it creates a deep obligation. However, it is an honor which is frequently rejected. There are many stories of parents choosing a godfather for selfish motives. For example, many parents are said to seek a childless couple who have some property, in the hope that their child will inherit it at the death of the godparents.

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Infants are traditionally swaddled in a sheet or cotton blanket with the arms bound tightly at their sides during nursing and sleeping. It is said that this is done to prevent the sleeping child from waking himself with a sudden movement of the hands which might cause *espanto*. Swaddling also serves to prevent the child from touching his genitals and from touching the mother's breast during nursing, "for the breast is not a toy." Swaddling, however, is viewed primarily as an important part of child training.

There is a widespread belief, particularly among the older women, that swaddling and binding the arms of the child will prevent him from "turning out bad" when he is older. Binding is an effort to make children more passive and quiet. Many families in the smaller barrios tie the sleeping child's wrists and ankles to keep him from moving under the swaddling blanket. This is done up to the time he walks, in order to train him to sleep quietly, for there is a belief that a quiet sleep is a good sleep. As girls get older, they are trained to sleep quietly and modestly, with their legs together.

It is believed that children who are bound will not touch things, will not be active or demanding, and will be less trouble to the mother. When an older child is mischievous or overactive, it is said that his mother did not bind his arms long enough. Also, when an older boy attempts to embrace a girl she might say, "What, didn't they bind you when you were a child?" Older women say it is more effective to keep a child bound for one year, but most women today do it until the child no longer permits it, or from six to nine months, depending upon how active the child is. More acculturated mothers often bind their children for only three months "out of pity," much to the annoyance of their mothers-in-law. One grandmother complained that she must always be watching her two-year-old grandson because he touches everything and wants to keep moving about. She blamed this on the fact that his mother swaddled him for only three months. A few women do not swaddle their infants at all. Old women frequently comment that infants and children are much more active today than they were a generation ago.

During the day, babies sleep in a shallow wooden cradle which hangs from the ceiling by a rope. The sleeping baby's face is covered with a *rebozo* or cloth to protect him from *los aires* and to keep out light and flies. The swaddled child is safer in the cradle, since swaddling prevents movements which might cause him to fall over the low sides. As the child gets older and more active he must be tied in or watched constantly because of the danger of falling out. Most cradles can be raised, to safeguard the child from animals wandering into the house, or lowered to prevent a high fall. Babies may be rocked to sleep in the cradle, but most of the time they fall asleep in the mother's arms while nursing and are then placed in the cradle.

Babies sleep with their mothers at night, on a *petate* on the floor or on a *tepexco*. If the mother is accustomed to sleeping in a bed, the child will be heavily wrapped at night to prevent wetting the mattress. Cases of mothers smothering babies during sleep are not rare, and usually the mother is blamed for carelessness. An un

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They are made of heavy satin and velvet and trimmings of glass beads, tiny mirrors, sequins, and gold fringe. Some men go to distant cities to purchase the finest materials. The huge hats are also more elaborate, and many are lighted by electric light bulbs placed in the brim and worked by concealed batteries. The cost of a complete *chinelo* outfit was between 100 and 300 pesos in 1944. By 1947, the cost had risen to over 600 pesos. An interesting aspect of the Carnaval is that the masked participants frequently ridicule and caricature popular figures in the village, much to their discomfiture.

Fiesta of Ash Wednesday, celebrated in the parish church: Initiates Lent and brings with it obligations to fast, pray, light candles at the altar, pay *limosnas*, etc. Most Tepoztecans go to church to "take the ash." They believe that the cross made on their foreheads by the priest protects them against sorcery and evil acts of enemies. This belief is strengthened by the fact that the ashes used are those from the burning of old images of holy figures. It is customary for Tepoztecans to bring old images to the sexton to be burned. When Lent begins, the images in the central church and in the chapels are ceremonially covered with purple cloths by men who have inherited the honor from their fathers.

Fiesta of First Friday of Lent, celebrated in Chalma and Jiutepec: Two *mayordomos* in Tepoztlán organize pilgrimages to these holy centers. Each *mayordomo* has a banner with images of the Santo Señor de Chalma and the Santo Cristo of Jiutepec. The pilgrimage to Chalma includes the *pastores*, children who will sing to the image. The group going to Jiutepec includes dancers.

Fiesta of Second Friday of Lent, celebrated in Cuautla: Only a few Tepoztecans attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of Third Friday of Lent, celebrated in Tepalzingo: Because of the fair held at Tepalzingo, many Tepoztecans go, particularly those who wish to buy or sell. *Curanderos* go to purchase herbs from other localities and to sell Tepoztecan herbs; the ropemakers of San Sebastián go to sell ropes. Local merchants go to buy *rebozos*, painted gourds, and curiosities.

Fiesta of Fourth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Tlayacapan: In homage of the *Virgen del Tránsito*. According to Tepoztecan legend, this image once belonged to Tepoztlán, but in 1770 it was taken to Tlayacapan to be repainted. On the way back the men who carried it became tired and set it down. When they were ready to go on they found the image had become too heavy to lift. This was interpreted to mean that the image wished a temple to be built for her there, and that is why she remained in Tlayacapan. It is believed that the image promised Tepoztlán water so long as Tepoztecans made pilgrimages to Tlayacapan. Thus, it is the custom of many Tepoztecan families to attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of the Sunday after Fourth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Ocotitlán: Only those with *compadres* or friends in Ocotitlán attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of Fifth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Mazatepec and Totolapan: Both towns have important fairs on this occasion. Pilgrimages to Totolapan are organized by the *mayordomía* of Gabriel Mariaca, and to Mazatepec by the *mayordomía* of the barrio of Santa Cruz. Those who go generally take many flowers to sell, especially the *yoloxochitl* (heart flower), and buy in return *petates*, *rebozos*, dried squash gourds, tamarind, and several types of dried seed.

March 19. *Fiesta of San José*, celebrated in Santa Cruz: The large image of San José is housed in the barrio chapel along with other saints. Since the devotees of this image have been steadily increasing, there is talk of building a separate chapel for the image.

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177 511 [265] [275] aged foods, mostly to the employed people who live in the center. Old women sold ready-made tortillas in the plaza. There was still no restaurant but there were more saloons. A blare of radios came from the houses and inside some homes one saw a new kerosene or Coleman stove, aluminum pots, kerosene or gasoline lamps, forks, and hand presses for shaping tortillas. At least one home had overstuffed furniture.

[161] [362] [427] But many more changes have occurred than meet the eye. As a result of the population increase—from 3,500 in 1940 to approximately 4,800 in 1957—there is a shortage of housesites and housing, and Tepoztecans petitioned the local government to make available some of the nearby communal lands for new housesites. Several homes have been built on the outskirts of the village and in the surrounding *cerros*. Formerly it was not customary to rent a house; if a Tepoztecan had an extra house he would allow another villager to use it simply for the care of it. Now rental has become quite usual.

177 [759] [278] Since the late forties Tepoztlán has had a resident doctor and since 1952 a doctor from Cuernavaca who formerly practiced in the village has come once a week to see his patients. The clientele of both doctors has been increasing. In 1950, the resident doctor had an average of 75 patients a month; by 1956 the average was 160. Tepoztecans now complain about the expense of medicines and the delay caused by having prescriptions filled in Cuernavaca; the local "druggist" cannot fill prescriptions and carries few patent medicines. The village has a free federal government health clinic which cares for children and pregnant women and administers injections. About ten patients, most of them expectant mothers, come there every day. In 1955 approximately two thousand vaccinations and revaccinations were given.

[743] [744] [751]

177 757 753 [759] [844] The clinic and the doctor have by no means replaced the *curanderos*, however. Tepoztecans believe that doctors can cure only certain diseases, and still frequent *curanderos* for those illnesses which they attribute to *los aires*, anger, hot or cold foods, evil eye, and sorcery. Most births are still attended by the native midwives. If the doctor happens to cure an illness thought to be caused by *los aires*, this is taken as proof that the *aires* were not truly the cause. Although the villagers have substituted new terms for old concepts—for example, *los aires* are now sometimes described as tiny animals or microbes and injections are called "cleansings"—it is questionable whether this represents much of a departure from the earlier magical thinking about the causes of disease.

177 241 [312] [377] [464] [314] Like many villages in the densely populated central plateau area, Tepoztlán has not had the benefit of the great new hydroelectric and irrigation projects. Its agricultural base has remained very much the same; there has been no mechanization and no new important cash crops have been introduced. The peasants continue to work their land as before, although a few are now using some commercial fertilizer. Because the lack of change in agriculture combined with the rapidly increasing population has forced Tepoztecans to seek work in nonfarm occupations, a much lower proportion of the gainfully occupied are now peasants. The federal campaign for the preservation of